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### UMN Morris Teacher Candidates Benefit from GEER Grant Awards

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## UMN Morris Teacher Candidates Benefit from GEER Grant Awards

*The COVID-19 pandemic has negatively impacted the progress of teacher candidates completing practicum experiences and student teaching in PK-12 classrooms.*

Eleven University of Minnesota Morris teacher candidates are receiving support after the [University of Minnesota was awarded a Governor's Emergency Educational Relief \(GEER\) Grant](#). GEER funding is a federal grant initiative to address emergency needs during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Teaching has always been a highly complex activity, requiring a multitude of decisions and responses in every single lesson," says Chair of the Division of Education and Professor of Secondary Education Michelle Page. "The current environment is very challenging to experienced educators, so imagine what it must be like for someone just beginning to teach."

The COVID-19 pandemic has particularly impacted the progress of teacher candidates completing practicum experiences and student teaching in PK-12 classrooms. The pandemic has interrupted placements and contributed to financial, food, and housing insecurity. And it has disproportionately affected students traditionally underrepresented in higher education.

"The pandemic has forced preservice teachers to dig deep into their reserves of resilience, flexibility, organization, and optimism," Page adds. "Some face multiple barriers: on top of the pandemic that we all are experiencing, they have high financial need, come from communities disproportionately affected by the pandemic, and/or have been experiencing racial trauma. Having just a small amount of funding to provide meals, transportation to schools, and technology tools can dial back the stress a tiny bit. And when that happens, it benefits the students."

Teaching students agree. "The funding from the GEER helped me pay for all of my licensure exams towards becoming an English teacher," says Samantha Tate '21, Covington, Washington. "As a two-sport athlete at the university, I lacked the time to work during the teacher program this year, so having those funds to put toward my licensure fees was amazing."

"When I first started student teaching, all of my students were distance learning," adds Andrea Glynn '21, Shakopee. "I decided I would try to save the money in case of any technical or resource issues. Now the grant money enables me to travel to my students! I know hybrid learning, simultaneously teaching the students in front of me and the other online students, will be a challenge. I'm grateful for the GEER grant and the financial support it provides me so I can meet the needs of all of my students."

UMN Twin Cities College of Education and Human Development Office of Teacher Education staff, including Stacy Ernst, Shuji Asai and Krista Overby, along with colleagues from the Morris, Duluth, and Crookston campuses, provided leadership for the application, screening, and individual award process.